

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-10, 16, 17, and 20-23 are pending in the application; the status of the claims is as follows:

Claims 1-5, 16, 17, and 20-23 are allowed.

Claims 6-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,475,537 to Kobayashi et al. ("Kobayashi") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,940,360 to Choi ("Choi").

Claim 10 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

Claim 6 has been amended to more distinctly claim the invention and to correct a grammatical error. These changes do not introduce any new matter.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection

The rejection of claims 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Kobayashi in view of Choi, is respectfully traversed based on the following.

Amended claim 6 includes the limitation of "a two-dimensional image sensing device that converts the optical image formed by said imaging lens system into an electronic signal." The present specification, in paragraph [0010], provides two different examples of two-dimensional image sensing devices: a CCD (charge coupled device) and a CMOS (complementary metal oxide semiconductor) sensor. These image sensing devices are two-dimensional, thereby including a plurality of pixels. The resultant electronic signal is a two-dimensional array of data, generally corresponding to the

intensity and color of the image at each pixel location. This electronic signal corresponds to an image data file as might be created by, for example, a digital camera, a video camera, or a camera incorporated into another apparatus, as disclosed in paragraph [0009] of the present specification. In summary, as used consistently throughout the present application, the optical image is of a two-dimensional subject or scene, thereby requiring the image sensing device to faithfully convert this two-dimensional subject into a corresponding electronic signal.

As noted in the Office action, Kobayashi does not disclose an image sensing device of any type. Thus, the Office Action relies upon Choi, which teaches the use of an image sensing device. However, Choi's image sensing device is not a two-dimensional image sensing device that converts a two-dimensional optical image into an electronic signal. Choi is concerned with converting the intensity of a reflected laser beam from an optical disk, such as a CD or a DVD, into "1"s and "0"s. In other words, Choi's electronic signal is completely different from the electronic signal of claim 6. Choi's electronic signal has no color component as a fixed wavelength laser is used. Further, because the laser is approximately a point source, not an extended two-dimensional source, its image will be a point. Thus, Choi's image sensing device need not be two-dimensional because Choi's image is not two-dimensional. Choi does disclose a multi-element image sensing device due to a hologram grating. The hologram creates two images, and thus a multi-element image sensing device is required. In summary, at no time does Choi create an electronic signal that corresponds to the color and/or intensity of a two-dimensional image as Choi does not image a two-dimensional subject. Therefore, the combination of Kobayashi and Choi does not disclose a two-dimensional image sensing device that converts an optical image (i.e., a subject or scene) into an electronic signal as required by claim 6, and thus cannot render obvious the invention of claim 6.

In addition, the applicants note the following. The present claims are directed to an imaging lens device that converts a two-dimensional optical image into an electronic

signal equivalent thereof. Such a device should faithfully transform a two-dimensional subject or scene into an electronic signal regardless of the colors present within the two-dimensional subject. Further, the imaging lens device should be capable of focusing on two-dimensional subjects that are close to or far from the imaging lens device. In contrast, Kobayashi and Choi need none of these capabilities. Kobayashi and Choi relate to detecting the presence or absence of a reflected spot of light, not a two-dimensional scene. Second, Kobayashi and Choi operate with one or two known wavelengths, not the full visible wavelength spectrum. Third, Kobayashi and Choi are relatively fixed focus as the optical disk (CD or DVD) will be a fixed distance from the image sensing device. For these reasons, it is not at all clear that one designing a digital camera would combine the teachings of two optical pickup devices from CD/DVD players.

For at least the above reasons, the combination of Kobayashi and Choi does not render obvious the imaging lens device found in claim 6. Claims 7-10 depend from nonobvious claim 6. Therefore, claims 7-10 are nonobvious for at least the same reasons as claim 6. Claims 7-10 include additional limitations that further distinguish them from the combination of Kobayashi and Choi. For example, as noted in the Office Action, Kobayashi discloses a back focal length to over all focal length (Bf/f) ratio of 0.234. This is more than 40% smaller than the smallest Bf/f ratio found in the limitation of claim 9, thereby providing another distinction over the combination of Kobayashi and Choi. Similarly, claim 10 includes limitations with respect to the focal length of the two individual lens elements relative to the overall focal length ($f1/f$ and $f2/f$). These limitations are not found in the combination of Kobayashi and Choi, and thus claim 10 is further distinguished over the combination of Kobayashi and Choi.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kobayashi in view of Choi, be reconsidered and withdrawn. Furthermore, it is respectfully requested that the objection to claim 10 due to its dependence upon a rejected base claim, be reconsidered and withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Wherefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is considered to be in condition for allowance, and an early reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

This Amendment does not increase the number of independent claims, does not increase the total number of claims, and does not present any multiple dependency claims. Accordingly, no fee based on the number or type of claims is currently due. However, if a fee, other than the issue fee, is due, please charge this fee to Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP's Deposit Account No. 18-1260.

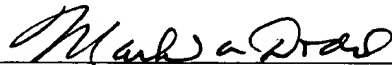
If an extension of time is required to enable this document to be timely filed and there is no separate Petition for Extension of Time filed herewith, this document is to be construed as also constituting a Petition for Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) for a period of time sufficient to enable this document to be timely filed.

Any other fee required for such Petition for Extension of Time and any other fee required by this document pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17, other than the issue fee,

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Respectfully submitted,

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